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JOURNAL

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

Wednesday - 10 October 1973

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1. [] GLC) Accompanied [] OCI, to a briefing of Senator Sam Nunn (D., Ga.) on the Sino Soviet situation. The Senator was also interested in the latest developments in the Arab/Israeli hostilities. [] brought him up-to-date on the situation, including the fact that the Soviets appear to be mounting a resupply effort to Syria and possibly Egypt.

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2. [] GLC) In response to Richard Perle's, Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, request yesterday, I provided him with a breakdown by quarters of the Soviet supply of tanks, amphibious vehicles, aircraft, missiles, and [] supplies provided Syria by the Soviets since the first of the year. I made a point of telling Perle that these figures were soft and we could not guarantee their accuracy with respect to specific time frames. He said he understood.

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Later in the day I also briefed Perle and Dorothy Fosdick, of the Committee staff, on the fact that there is now evidence that at least 18 Soviet military related AN-12 transport aircraft have landed or were en route to Syria this morning in what appears to be a resupply of air defense equipment. I said we had not detected any flight activities into Egypt. They asked if we would keep them informed of any further developments.

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3. [] GLC) Called Jed Johnson, Senate Watergate Committee, to advise him that our file checks on [] have been negative. I made it clear to Johnson that there was always the possibility that someone had had some contact with this individual, but our record checks do not reflect this fact.

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4. [] GLC) Left with Jack Ticer, Senate Armed Services Committee staff, for Ed Braswell, of the staff, a DCI Congressional Briefing sheet dated 10 October 1973 on the Middle East and a summary of today's situation reports on the situation. I asked Ticer to be sure to bring these to Braswell's attention with the suggestion that Senator Symington be alerted to their contents.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

10 October 1973

Highlights of the Middle East Situation

THE MILITARY SITUATION

GENERAL

1. The war enters the fifth day showing no promise of a short decisive campaign for either side. The evening passed quietly on both fronts with Israeli air attacks starting at daybreak. No concurrent ground action has been detected on either front.
2. The Egyptians have established their force firmly on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal, forcing an Israeli admission that their ground forces have been unable to push them back. In the Golan Heights, despite heavy fighting, the Israelis have been unable to push the Syrians back beyond the 1967 cease-fire line, and they admit that they have not broken the Syrian army. The ground is still contested, however, and no clear-cut advantage is evident for either side.
3. Heavy fighting continues on both fronts, but neither side has made deep advances. Egyptian forces already across the canal continue to be reinforced, and the Israelis admit they have not been successful in destroying all of the Egyptian bridges. Israeli aircraft continued their attack with little opposition from Arab fighters, but remain under heavy fire from SAMs and anti-aircraft guns.
4. The depth of the Egyptian bridgehead varies from 5 kilometers to as much as 20 kilometers, and over 500 Egyptian tanks are reported to be on the east bank. The Israeli counterattacks have not been successful in pushing the Egyptians back to the canal despite Israeli air support. Logistical factors are beginning to have an effect on the battle as some Israeli units are experiencing shortages of artillery ammunition, while the Arabs continue to fire without restraint.

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5. The introduction of another Syrian armored division into the battle for the Golan Heights yesterday is helping Damascus to hold its ground despite continuing heavy Israeli airstrikes. The Syrians are still holding Qunaytirah, but Israel claims to have crossed into Syrian territory late this afternoon Tel Aviv time. Syrian fighters have responded to the Israeli aircraft but have been unable to gain control of the air. Israeli aircraft struck the ports of Latakia, and Tartous today, and the city of Hims in central Syria.

EGYPTIAN FRONT

6. Egyptian armored and infantry forces continue to hold the east bank of the canal, and Tel Aviv admits that Egyptian forces have advanced 10 kilometers into the Sinai. Cairo claims penetrations as much as 20 kilometers. Israeli air attacks on the canal bridges appear to be having only limited success, and the Israelis concede that the Egyptians are continuing to reinforce their bridgeheads.

7. The Israeli air force this morning renewed its attacks on Egyptian positions on the west bank of the Canal and on the bridges crossing the Canal. According to Israeli press accounts, there has been little activity along the canal over the evening. The Egyptians continued to resupply their forces over the night without opposition from air attack. Despite losses taken during the air attacks of the last few days, the Egyptians evidently are able to keep their bridges in operation and their forces supplied.

8. With yesterday's admission that their ground forces were unable to destroy the Egyptian forces on the eastern bank, the Israelis are counting on their air force to hold the line. For the last two days, the Israelis have concentrated their air attacks along the canal in the face of heavy antiaircraft fire--guns and surface-to-air missiles--covering the bridgeheads. The Israelis reportedly lost seven fighters during these attacks. By late yesterday some success may have been achieved in suppressing these defenses, and communications intercepted from the Port Said area indicate the Israeli pilots are not experiencing opposition from Egyptian air defenses.

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An Egyptian incursion yesterday reached the Mitla Pass but, according to the Israelis, was driven off by air attacks. The Israelis claim to have stabilized the lines and to be establishing defensive positions in front of the Egyptian forces. They claim to be building up their forces behind these lines for what Israel acknowledges will be a longer war than initially it expected. The earlier confidence of a short and decisive counter-stroke has faded and the Israelis are facing up to Egyptian forces that are more capable than they had envisaged.

10. Although the military situation is still far from settled, some Israeli newspapers are calling for the destruction of Syrian and Egyptian military capability to prevent future Arab attacks. A columnist with Haaretz, an authoritative Tel Aviv daily, however, points out the dilemma for Israel if it should carry out such a policy. The columnist argues that a resounding defeat would make it almost impossible for Arab governments to enter into negotiations with Israel. He said that a military victory could serve as a political instrument if military aims were accompanied by political aims. He notes, however, that the Israeli Government has made it clear that it has no political aims in this war and concludes that the main fruit of the struggle is also likely to be a military victory.

11. Few details are available on the ground fighting, but Cairo claims that a major tank battle occurred in the Sinai this morning and that its forces destroyed over a hundred Israeli tanks. More than 500 Egyptian tanks are across the canal, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The Egyptians are husbanding their air force and depending on their SAM air defenses, particularly the SA-6 which can move forward with the ground forces, to defend against the Israeli air attacks. At least 30 Israeli air sorties have been directed against the Port Said area today with some 25 additional Israeli aircraft attacking elsewhere along the length of the Canal.

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12. The Israelis also attacked two Egyptian airfields in the delta region--Quwaysina and Abu Hammad--and a radar station on the Mediterranean coast this morning.

13. Logistical factors may begin to have an effect on the battle soon. The Israelis are anticipating some

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ammunition shortage for their artillery and have requested 105- and 155-mm ammunition [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The Israelis have indicated that the Egyptians are expending ammunition and missiles at a very high rate, as though they had unlimited supplies.

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SYRIAN FRONT

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14. Heavy air activity resumed over the Syrian front early on 10 October with at least 40 Israeli and Syrian planes engaged in dogfights over the Golan Heights and in the Syrian interior. The Syrians claim that they have downed 14 more Israeli jets today, while [REDACTED] 17 Syrian planes were destroyed.

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15. Israeli planes also struck the Syrian ports of Latakia and Tartous and the city of Hims in central Syria this morning. An Israeli spokesman claims that "accurate hits" were made on fuel depots in Hims and the naval headquarters at Latakia. A Syrian military spokesman has stated that six Israeli aircraft were downed on these raids. The Damascus radio also claims that four Israeli planes attempted to strafe the Damascus International airport, but that Syrian air defenses downed three of the planes.

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16. On the ground, two Syrian armored divisions and three infantry divisions continued to hold Qunaytirah, in the central part of the Golan Heights this morning, where UN observers reported heavy fighting. [REDACTED] Israeli [REDACTED] forces crossed into Syria late this afternoon, Tel Aviv time, has not yet been confirmed. With the introduction of another armored division into the Golan Heights on 9 October, the Syrians may now have as many as 700 operational tanks, 28,000 infantry, and 10,000 to 15,000 armored troops in the Golan area.

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17. Although Syria has reportedly lost 55 aircraft, it still has sufficient aircraft for air defense operations, and Syrian airfields are believed to be essentially serviceable.

18. As the fighting entered its fifth day the situation on the Golan Heights remains stable after a quiet night. There are conflicting reports from both Syria and Israel concerning the positions they hold, with both sides claiming to hold the cease-fire line. Syrian forces still retain possession of Qunaytirah despite Israeli attempts to retake it.

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19. Radio Jerusalem reports that early this morning the IAF began conducting heavy air strikes against Syrian armored forces in the Heights. [] indicate that Israeli aircraft were attacking a Syrian armored column in the area and Syria claims to have downed two Israeli jets in the fighting. On the ground, fighting this morning seems to be limited to minor skirmishes.

20. [] indicate that an Iraqi force has entered Syria and is en route to the front. This force includes at least one tank regiment. Beirut newspapers state that the Iraqi contingent numbers 16,000 men, 100 tanks, and has taken up positions on the Heights. There are no other reports that the Iraqis have reached the Heights area.

21. The Syrians have published a list of those injured in yesterday's attack on the Soviet cultural mission in Damascus. No Russian names figure in the list, and Syrian officials refuse to confirm or deny that 30 Soviets were killed in the raid. The wreckage of the building has not been completely cleared, however, and further bodies may be discovered. According to press reports, the Syrian director of the mission was badly injured and a number of Syrian students were wounded. Other press cables from Damascus report that the oil refineries at Hims were severely damaged by Israeli air strikes and that three Israeli aircraft were lost in the attack.

DAMASCUS AIR RAID

22. [] damage to the diplomatic and foreign residential area in Damascus is severe as a result of yesterday's raid. He estimates total civilian casualties in the city to be about 150 plus more than 200 wounded. [] has learned of no American casualties. He describes the mood in Damascus as "ugly." The widespread rumor throughout the city is that American pilots carried out the bombing.

COMMITMENTS BY OTHER ARAB STATES

23. Egyptian and Syrian military "successes," which may have exceeded their own expectations, appear to be galvanizing some Arab states into action that normally would prefer to stay at arms length from hostilities. The Iraqis have committed air units and ground forces, the

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Moroccans are sending their second contingent of ground troops, and Tunisian troops are reported to have arrived in Egypt. Also, the Algerians have dispatched some MIG aircraft to Egypt, and now the Saudis, traditionally very cautious, are preparing to move troops to Syria through Jordan.

24. Whether King Faysal intends his units--whose value is marginal--to see front-line duty is not clear. In any event, it is apparent that the time is growing short when King Husayn, who is calling up his reserves, will have to make a similar decision. Quick and decisive Israeli military action, particularly in the Golan area, perhaps within hours, may be the only way the King can preserve his present military posture. Jordan's entry into the hostilities would seriously affect Israeli planning and strategy, and divert increasingly scarce resources to a new front, even though Jordanian capabilities are relatively limited.

SOVIET AIRLIFT

25. Moscow appears to be mounting a resupply effort to Syria and possibly to Egypt. At least 18 Soviet military-related AN-12 transport aircraft landed or were en route to Syria this morning. Most of the aircraft have landed at Damascus, although some have landed at Aleppo in northern Syria. This activity probably involves resupply of air defense equipment--SAM missiles and conventional antiaircraft guns. [REDACTED]

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26. The apparent resupply effort suggests that Moscow has reassessed its earlier cautious response to the Middle East conflict and decided to cast its lot more fully on the side of the Arabs.

27. This decision may be the result of the relatively good showing of the Arab forces as well as a Soviet desire to protect its broader Middle East investment.

28. Moscow, however, has not stepped up its media attention to the Middle East situation and has played in low-key yesterday's bombing of its cultural center in Damascus. A TASS dispatch issued today on the attack on Damascus contained only brief reference to the bombing of the cultural center and made no mention of casualties.

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